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ABSTRACT

Presented is a position paper concerning commitments and responsibilities to exceptional children which was prepared by the Policies Commission at the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), and a policy statement on governmental affairs developed by the CEC Legislative Committee. A brief policy statement follows discussion of each of the following topics in the position paper: the goal of special education, implementation of universal education (compulsory services and compulsory attendance), early and continuing education, the maintenance of attendance (school excuse, exclusion, and expulsion), the relations of special and regular school programs, the placement of children in special school programs, elimination of the labeling and categorizing of children, the need for flexibility and development in special educational services, the role of schools in the provision of comprehensive services, the relationship between the school and the family, the responsibilities of higher educational institutions, and levels of governmental responsibility for the support of special education. The policy statement considers the desired scope of programs for exceptional children and youth; governmental responsibility at federal, state, and local levels; the responsibility of the private sector; the preparation and utilization of personnel; research and dissemination; program evaluation; interagency and interdisciplinary cooperation; the responsibilities of CEC, and special concerns related to minority groups. (GW)

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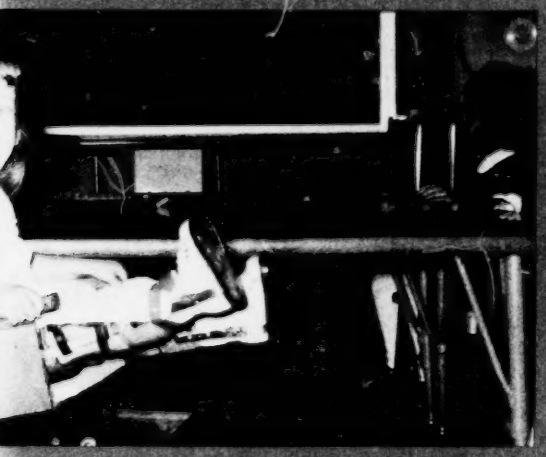

BASIC COMMITMENTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES TO EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN

AND

POLICY STATEMENT ON GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

The Council for Exceptional Children
1411 South Jefferson Davis Highway
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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
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BASIC COMMITMENTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES TO EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN

Education is the right of all children.

The principle of education for all is based on the philosophical premise of democracy that every person is valuable in his own right and should be afforded equal opportunities to develop his full potential. Thus, no democratic society should deny educational opportunities to any child, regardless of his potentialities for making a contribution to society. Since the passage of the first public school laws in the mid nineteenth century, the principle has received general endorsement and qualified execution. While lip service has been paid to the intent of the principle, various interpretations of the terms "education" and "all children" have deprived many children of their right.

The ordinary educational opportunities provided by the schools have tended to neglect or exclude children with unusual learning needs: the gifted; the physically, mentally, and emotionally handicapped; and the victims of socioeconomic and cultural differences. These children need special education—specialized diagnostic and instructional services—and, in order to be able to benefit fully from the education, they need the opportunity to view themselves as acceptable to society. They need stable and supportive home lives, wholesome community interactions, and the opportunity to view themselves and others in a healthy manner.

Because of their exceptionality, many of the children need to begin their school experiences at earlier ages than are customary for children in our society, many need formal educational services well into adulthood, and many require health and social services that are closely coordinated with school programs. Meeting these needs is essential to the total development of exceptional children as individuals and as members of society.

For some decades now, educators and schools have been responding to the challenge of educating the exceptional children. At least five times as many school systems provide special education services today as a quarter of a century ago. Still, not all children are being provided for fully; relatively few services exist for the intellectually gifted child, for example, and less than half of the children who need highly specialized services are receiving them. The community should extend its demand that school personnel must learn to understand and serve the individual needs of these children as well as those more easily accommodated in the educational system. The surge of interest among educators in individualizing instruction hopefully will mean more sensitivity to the educational needs of all children, and particularly to those with special needs.

The problem of providing special educational services is admittedly multiple and complex. Many interest groups, such as the parents of handicapped, inner city, minority group children; community organizations, and the frequent legislative studies at both state and national levels, have created many issues over

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The problem of providing special educational services is admittedly multiple and complex. Many interest groups, such as the parents of handicapped, inner city, minority group children; community organizations, and the frequent legislative studies at both state and national levels, have created many issues over the direction and kinds of services that should be provided. Who should be educated? What are the rights of the family in determining the education of exceptional children? What is the role of the school and other agencies in providing services for the exceptional child and his family? These issues must be resolved if the right of education for all is to be reflected in a meaningful commitment to and provision of education for every child.

The policies proposed here are an attempt to clarify the basic commitments and responsibilities of special educators, those educators whose professional competencies center on educating exceptional children. This position paper* is the first in a series initiated by the new Policies Commission of The Council for Exceptional Children; it is the hope of the Council that the position papers will become a seminal force for continuing change. Each policy statement is preceded by a discussion that establishes the rationale for the statement. In order to keep the paper within a reasonable size limit, the discussions are necessarily kept to a minimum.

While the statement which follows pertains mainly to handicapped children, the Policies Commission plans an early position paper dealing with the issues of educating gifted children.

The Goal and Commitment of Special Education

The fundamental purposes of special education are the same as those of regular education: the optimal

*Developed in a series of discussions from an original draft statement by Maynard C. Reynolds and Coralie Wells Dietrich.

development of the individual as a skillful, free, and purposeful person, able to plan and manage his own life and to reach his highest potential as an individual and as a member of society. Indeed, special education developed as a set of highly specialized areas of education in order to provide exceptional children with the same opportunities as other children for a meaningful, purposeful, and fulfilling life.

To special educators, the statements of educational goals that stress the primacy of intellectual development are inadequate. They have learned from their experiences with children who have learning problems that so called "intelligent" behavior is interrelated with individual motivation, cultural values, physical competency, self esteem, and other noncognitive variables.

Perhaps the most important concept that has been developed in special education as the result of experiences with exceptional children is that of the fundamental individualism of every child. The aspiration of special educators is to see every child as a unique composite of potentials, abilities, and learning needs for whom an educational program must be designed to meet his particular needs. From its beginnings, special education has championed the cause of children with learning problems. It is as the advocates of such children and of the concept of individualization that special education can come to play a major creative role in the mainstream of education.

The special competencies of special educators are more than a collection of techniques and skills. They comprise a body of knowledge, methods, and philosophical tenets that are the earmark of the profession. As professionals, special educators are dedicated to the optimal education of exceptional children and they reject the misconception of schooling that is nothing but custodial care.

Policy: ***The focus of all education should be the unique learning needs of the individual child, and of the child as a total functioning organism. All educators should recognize and accept the identity of fundamental purposes in both special and regular education.***

The purpose of special education is to enlarge the variety of educational programs for all children so that the individualization of programs may be furthered as a way of fulfilling the fundamental purposes of education for all children, whatever their needs.

As advocates of the rights of all children to education, special educators affirm their professionalism.

The principle of education for all is based on the philosophical premise of democracy that every person is valuable in his own right and should be afforded equal opportunities to develop his full potential.

Implementation of Universal Education

Compulsory Services and Compulsory Attendance

The provision of universal education of children in a democratic society has been translated as a commitment to the providing of educational opportunities for every child, whatever may be his socioeconomic status; cultural or racial origins; physical, intellectual, emotional equipment; potential contribution to society; and whatever his educational needs may be. This commitment to *every child* thus includes a commitment to children with unusual learning needs and to those with outstanding abilities and talents. Although providing education for these children may require a variety of specialized services and instructional programs, some costly, and some requiring radical innovations in traditional educational structures, there is no test that can be used to include some children and exclude others where the principle of universal education is concerned.

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Some of the specialized services that may be essential if exceptional children are to attend school include the provision of transportation facilities, functional architectural environments, personalized equipment aids, individualized instruction programs, and special education and supporting personnel. Certainly the dollar-and-cents outlay for such programs may be great; if they are not instituted and maintained, however, the cost of neglect is infinitely greater and must be borne mainly by the children as well as by their families, the communities, and society as a whole.

Policy: ***The concept of universal education includes exceptional children as well as others. Efforts should be strongly supported to make explicit the obligations of local and state and provincial governments to educate exceptional children.***

State and provincial requirements concerning education should include participation in educational programs by all exceptional children.

Early and Continuing Education

Schools have traditionally assumed educational responsibilities for children beginning at about age 5 or 6 years and ending with late adolescence. Increasingly, it is apparent that formal educational experiences at earlier ages would pay rich dividends in the full development of the capabilities of many exceptional children. Special educators now have much useful knowledge and technique for working with very young exceptional children. What is needed is the identification of the children who could benefit from early education and the actual implementation of programs.

Communities should make their schools responsible for conducting search and census operations through which children who may need specialized education at very early ages can be identified. The voluntary enrollment of such children by their parents is inadequate because many parents may not be aware of the child's special needs or of available forms of assistance. An important part of early education programs is procedures for child study that encourage adaptations to the particular needs of very young exceptional children.

Individuals with special talents, gifts, or handicaps frequently need education and periodic re-education beyond the traditional school-leaving ages. To encourage the continuing development of youths and

adults and to maximize their contributions to society, vigorous efforts are necessary to provide them with vocational education, placement services, employment counseling, and job training. For any child with educational problems, the schools should provide the facilities for the continuation of his education or for retraining when necessary at whatever age.

Policy: ***Schools should provide educational services for individuals according to their needs and regardless of age.***

Schools should actively seek out children who may have specialized educational needs in the first years of their lives. A particular commitment should be made to initiate home-care training programs for parents of infants with special needs, to establish specialized nursery school and kindergarten programs, and to utilize specialized components of regular early education programs to serve exceptional children.

Competency and maximal development should be the criteria for terminating an individual's schooling rather than age. Ideally, no person's formal education would ever be terminated; the school should always be ready to serve his educational and training needs as required for his optimal development as an independent, productive person.

The Maintenance of Attendance: School Excuse, Exclusion, and Expulsion

The schools' commitment to compulsory, universal education has often been circumvented by the indiscriminate use of excuse, exclusion, and expulsion. Children with problems have frequently been demitted from schools on the dubious grounds that they were uneducable, had undesirable characteristics, or disrupted the education of other children.

A host of legal decisions in recent years has emphasized the right of children to attend school unless their presence is provably harmful to others. Other decisions have enunciated the doctrine that children have a legal right to education and therefore cannot be excluded from all or part of school activities without legal procedures.

When a child is suspended from all or part of the school activities as a disciplinary measure, the suspension should be for a limited period, the order should include provisions for the child's re-entry, and the date of re-entry should be definite.

Although children are normally excused from school for routine reasons of illness or family arrangements, long term excuses should be permitted only under extraordinary conditions and should be under continual review.

Since no child's right to an education may be legally abrogated, the exclusion of any child on the ground that no facilities are available for him cannot be tolerated. For the past three decades the trend in state and provincial laws has been to develop special education services at local levels; the special programs for a small number of exceptional children

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Since no child's right to an education may be legally abrogated, the exclusion of any child on the ground that no facilities are available for him cannot be tolerated. For the past three decades the trend in state and provincial laws has been to develop special education services at local levels; the special programs for a small number of exceptional children that may seem impractical can often be made possible by innovative approaches and uses of available regular and consultative personnel.

Policy: ***The excuse, exclusion, or expulsion of children from all or part of school activities should not be permitted except under extraordinary conditions with due acknowledgement of the children's legal rights.***

1. ***All demissions should be for stated periods of time and should include definite provisions for admitting or re-admitting the children to school.***
2. ***Children so demitted should remain the continuing responsibilities of the schools. Their demissions should be under continuous review so that the children can be re-admitted as soon as possible.***
3. ***Outside agencies should be involved when necessary to facilitate the children's re-admission.***
4. ***An accurate register should be maintained by local school agencies and by state or provincial agencies of all children excused, excluded, or expelled from all or parts of school programs and of the reasons for the demissions. These agencies should concern themselves with solving problems attendant to the demissions.***
5. ***To prevent the exclusion of exceptional children from local schools, state and provincial agencies should assess the gaps and needs in community services and cooperate with the local schools in filling them.***

Special Education Within the Schools

The Relations of Special and Regular School Programs

Special education is an integral part of the total educational enterprise, not a separate order. In any school system special education is a means of enlarging the capacity of the system to serve the educational needs of all children.

The particular function of special education within the schools (and the education departments of other institutions) is to identify children with unusual needs and to aid in the effective fulfillment of those needs.

This fulfillment, at the present time, is accomplished in many regular school programs, as well as by many special programs that cannot be included in regular classrooms by teachers without assistance. A primary goal of educators should be to help build accommodative learning opportunities for exceptional children in mainstream educational programs. In the implementation of this goal special education can serve as a support system; special educators can assist regular school personnel in managing the education of exceptional children.

When the special placement of a child is required, the aim of the placement should be to maximize the development and freedom of the child rather than to accommodate the regular classroom.

Policy: ***Special education should function within and as a part of the regular, public school framework. Within this framework, the function of special education should be to participate in the creation and maintenance of a total educational environment suitable for all children.***

From their base in the regular school system special educators can foster the development of specialized resources by coordinating their specialized contributions with the contributions of the regular school system. One of the primary goals of special educators should be the enhancement of regular school programs as a resource for all children.

The Placement of Children in Special School Programs

Special education takes many forms and can be provided within a broad spectrum of administrative arrangements. Agreement is general that children with special educational needs should be served in regular classrooms and neighborhood schools insofar as these arrangements are conducive to good educational progress. It is necessary sometimes, however, to provide special supplementary services for exceptional children or to remove them from parts or all of regular programs. Sometimes it is even necessary to remove some children from their homes and communities for placement in residential schools, hospitals, or training centers. Even when residential school placements have been made, it is desirable that the children attend local community schools for parts of their schooling. Under such programs, it is essential that the local schools be fully willing to accept the children.

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The continuum for regular to highly specialized schools (often residential) represents the broad range of educational programs that is available to meet the individual needs of exceptional children. It is not uncommon for children to be placed into one or another special education facility by processes of rejection or by simplistic testing-categorizing methods rather than by careful decisions that seek to optimize the benefits for the children. When no options exist, as often occurs in the planning for gifted children or those with severe handicaps, and when decisions are made poorly, the children are denied their fundamental rights to free public education and the education authorities violate the basic tenets of our democratic society.

Schools as a whole and in all their parts are a resource for children, and placements should be made among and within them only for valid educational reasons. In the process the psycho-social needs of the children should not be overlooked. Like all children, exceptional children need environmental stability, emotional nurturance, and social acceptance.

Policy: ***Special education should be arranged for exceptional children whenever feasible to protect the stability of their home, school, and community relationships and to enhance their self concepts. Special education placements, particularly those involving separation from community, school, and home life, should be made only after careful study and for compelling reasons.***

Within schools the placement of all children should maximize their opportunities for the best possible education. Specialized placements that are effected crudely and simply by the rejection of children from regular school situations are educationally and morally indefensible. Special education is not and should not be used as a residual operation or catchall for children who are difficult to teach. Equally indefensible is the failure to develop needed differentiation of school programs that results in the confinement of pupils in inappropriate educational settings.

Elimination of the Labeling-Categorizing of Children

The field of special education is concerned with children who have unusual needs and with school programs that employ unusual techniques. As the result of early attitudes and programs that stressed assistance for severely handicapped children, the field developed a vocabulary and practices based on the labeling and categorizing of children. In recent decades the labeling-categorizing was extended to children with milder degrees of exceptionality. The continued use of the terms, unfortunately, tends to rigidify the thinking of all educators on the significance and purposes of special education and to be dysfunctional and even harmful for the children.

Words such as "defective," "disabled," "retarded," "impaired," "disturbed," and "disordered," when attached to children with special needs, are stigmatic labels that produce unfortunate results in both the children and the community's attitudes toward the children. The problems are magnified when the field organizes and regulates its programs around classification systems that define categories of children according to such terms. Many of the classifications are oriented to etiology, prognosis, or necessary medical treatment rather than to educational classifications and are of little value to the schools. Simple psychometric thresholds, which have sometimes been allowed to become pivotal considerations in educational decision making, present another set of labeling problems.

The most valuable contribution to education that special education makes is in terms of its specialized knowledge and competencies, values, and procedures for individualizing educational programs for individual children, whatever their special needs. Indeed, special educators at their most creative are the advocates of children who are not well served by schools except by special arrangements. To further the understanding and servicing of such children, special educators as well as other educational personnel should eliminate the use of simplistic categorizing.

No one can deny the importance of some of the variables that traditionally have had importance in special education such as intelligence, hearing, and vision. However, these variables in all their complex forms and degrees must be assessed in terms of educational relevance for a particular child. Turning the variables into typologies that may contribute to excesses in labeling-categorizing children is indefensible and should be eliminated.

In the past many legislative and regulating systems have specified criteria for including children in an approved category as the starting point for specialized programing and funding. The practice places high incentives on the labeling of children and undoubtedly results in the erroneous placement of many children.

It is desirable that financial aids be tied to educational programs rather than to children and that systems for allocating children to specialized programs be much more open than in the past.

Policy: ***Special educators should enhance the accommodative capacity of schools and other educational agencies to serve children with special needs more effectively. In identifying such children, special educators should be concerned with the identification of their educational needs, not with generalized labeling or categorizing of children.***

Decisions about the education of children should be made in terms of carefully individualized procedures that are explicitly oriented to the children's developmental needs.

To further discourage the labeling-categorizing of children, programs should be created on the basis of the educational functions served rather than on the basis of categories of children served.

Regulatory systems that enforce the rigid categorization of pupils as a way of allocating them to specialized programs are indefensible. Financial aids for special education should be tied to specialized programs rather than to finding and placing children in those categories and programs.

The Need for Flexibility and Development

Because of rapid changes and developments in the environmental factors that influence the characteristics of children and the conditions of their lives,

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vision. However, these variables in all their complex forms and degrees must be assessed in terms of educational relevance for a particular child. Turning the variables into typologies that may contribute to excesses in labeling-categorizing children is indefensible and should be eliminated.

In the past many legislative and regulating systems have specified criteria for including children in an approved category as the starting point for specialized programing and funding. The practice places high incentives on the labeling of children and undoubtedly results in the erroneous placement of many children.

It is desirable that financial aids be tied to educational programs rather than to children and that systems for allocating children to specialized programs be much more open than in the past.

Policy: ***Special educators should enhance the accommodative capacity of schools and other educational agencies to serve children with special needs more effectively. In identifying such children, special educators should be concerned with the identification of their educational needs, not with generalized labeling or categorizing of children.***

Decisions about the education of children should be made in terms of carefully individualized procedures that are explicitly oriented to the children's developmental needs.

To further discourage the labeling-categorizing of children, programs should be created on the basis of the educational functions served rather than on the basis of categories of children served.

Regulatory systems that enforce the rigid categorization of pupils as a way of allocating them to specialized programs are indefensible. Financial aids for special education should be tied to specialized programs rather than to finding and placing children in those categories and programs.

The Need for Flexibility and Development

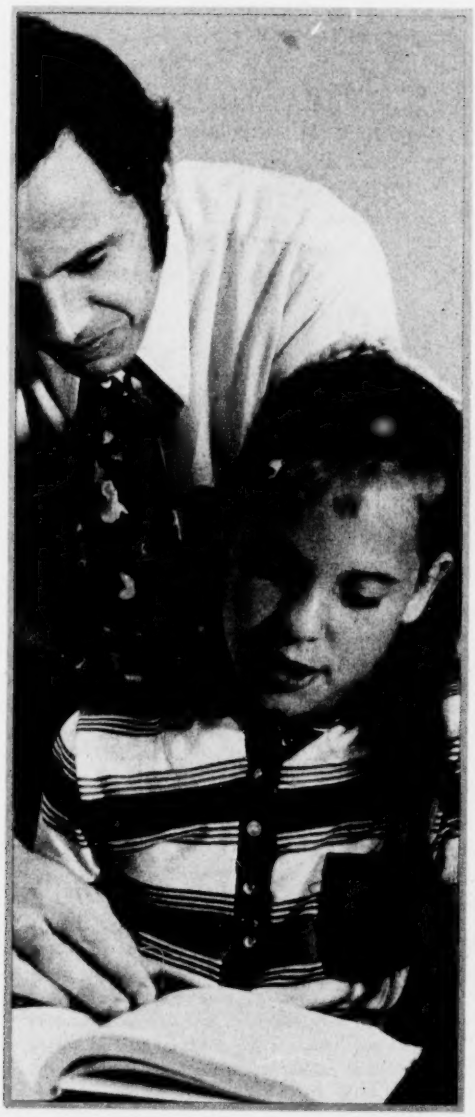
Because of rapid changes and developments in the environmental factors that influence the characteristics of children and the conditions of their lives, special education should maintain a flexibility that permits it to adapt to changing requirements.

The most valuable contribution to education that special education makes is in terms of its specialized knowledge and competencies, values, and procedures for individualizing educational programs for individual children, whatever their special needs.

Some of the events and changes that have had major impact on special education in recent years are the following: a rubella epidemic, discovery of preventatives for retrolental fibroplasia, increasing number of premature births, increasing awareness of the deleterious effects of poverty and malnutrition, new techniques in surgical intervention, invention of individual electronic hearing aids, and adaptation of low-vision aids. Changes and developments in public health, medicine, technology, and social programs may have only a small total effect in school systems but they frequently have major impacts on special education programs. Changes in one aspect of special education quickly are reflected in other aspects of the field as, for example, the rapid development of day school programs for exceptional children which has been reflected by a more severely handicapped population in residential schools.

Policy: ***Special educators must seek to be highly flexible in the provision of services and the use of technology and techniques to meet the changing needs of exceptional children.***

School administrators and special educators have particular responsibility for sustaining their professional awareness and development as a basis for changing programs to meet changing needs.



The School and Comprehensive Services

Over the decades schools have increasingly broadened their services to children and communities in many ways as, for example, adding school psychologists and social workers to the regular staffs. There is a growing movement among educators to become general child advocates and to make the school a broad, developmentally oriented, competency producing agency that takes over functions sometimes assigned to other agencies. By contrast, strong voices are also urging that schools limit their activities. They want schools to restrict their concerns to raising the intellectual levels of children and to avoid substituting themselves for other agencies or placing themselves *in loco parentis.*

At issue is the question of what role schools and other agencies should play in meeting the needs of exceptional children and in responding to the demands for a wide range of services from the families of such children. At the root of the issue is the problem that many children and their families need coordinated services in health, recreation, and welfare, as well as in education. The achievement of coordinated child centered and family centered services is difficult because of the fragmentation of responsibilities for those services among many agencies and professions. The school's role in the development of comprehensive programs is in a state of confusion because of the differing points of view.

The Educational Policies Commission, a former joint venture of the National Education Association and the American Association of School Administrators, issued two statements on the problem, a decade apart in time, each embracing a different point of view. The 1939 statement, entitled *Social Services and the Schools*, advocated the limited view that health, welfare, and recreation services should function outside the schools and meet the schools' concerns through liaison and persuasion. This arrangement can be criticized on the grounds of its looseness and diffusion of leadership, authority, and responsibility.

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The 1948 statement, *Education for All American Children*, proposed that schools provide the children of a community with a broad range of services including, among others, health, psychological welfare, and family counseling services; residential programs for exceptional children from rural areas; nursery school and early education programs in the home; and provisions for dropouts based on concern for the problems of minority groups.

No clear answers can be proposed here. The issue indicates, however, that very real problems about the role of schools exist and that solutions must be sought.

Policy: ***As long as exceptional children need comprehensive services, schools should be actively concerned with the problem of how such services can be best provided. Because the availability of comprehensive services is related to the purposes of education for exceptional children, schools should be prepared to go beyond their traditional role as coordinators or users of other community services and lead the way in developing new and experimental forms of comprehensive child and family services.***

The School and the Family

The family is the fundamental social unit in our culture. As such it is invested with primary rights and obligations regarding the education of the child. The parents must have access to all available necessary information in order to be able to make optimal decisions about the child's education and to fulfill the family's obligations to the child. In recognition of these rights and because wholesome family relationships are vital requisites to the child's educational development, the school should establish mechanisms to provide adequate counseling and family services to insure that the parental participation in the decision making processes will be on an informed basis. More broadly, the school should establish whatever structures are needed to create a genuine partnership with parents and community organizations in designing and implementing educational programs.

One of the most significant and promising developments in our society is the steady extension of participation in policy making to consumers of services. It is healthy and desirable that parents and lay groups should make their particular concerns known and have a part in policy formation. The consumers of

services—the children themselves—are a valuable resource in evaluating the organization and delivery of services; they should not be ignored.

The child is not only a family member but an individual with basic rights to total educational development. When his basic rights as an individual and citizen are violated, even unwittingly and without malevolent intent on the part of the family, the school as an agent of the state should assume the necessary responsibilities to assure the child's rights to the fullest development of his capacities. It is urgently important that the schools employ qualified personnel to perform in this domain as it is an extremely sensitive area.

Policy: ***As a means of strengthening special education programs, the parents of exceptional children and organized community groups should be given a responsible voice in educational policy formation and planning activities.***

The primary consumers of educational services, the children, should not be ignored as a valuable resource in the evaluation of the organization and delivery of services.

As a means of strengthening the family in fulfilling its obligations to children with exceptional needs, the schools should provide educationally related counseling and family services. In cases of clear educational neglect, the schools, through qualified professional personnel, should make extraordinary arrangements for educational services.

The Responsibility of Higher Education

Historically, the training programs for teachers and other educational personnel needed to operate special education programs were started in service centers, such as institutions for blind, deaf, and retarded children. Subsequently, a few colleges launched summer training programs in the early 1900's; by the 1930's, full-fledged programs were functioning in perhaps half a dozen colleges in the United States.

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Only after World War II did large numbers of colleges and universities become involved in full sequences of special education training, and even into the 1970's many regions are left unserved by higher education. Even shorter is the history of research activities in special education as aspects of higher education functions.

Although programs for exceptional children can be and often have been started without specialized personnel, the training resources of colleges and universities are needed in support of quality programs. Through their full participation, training programs can be instituted that are creatively oriented and field related; and inservice training programs to upgrade and expand the expertise of personnel already working in the area can be established.

Policy: *Colleges and universities have an obvious but, at this time, not completely filled obligation to develop and coordinate their resources in support of programs for exceptional children. The obligation comprises a number of factors:*

1. *To provide through scholarly inquiry an expanded knowledge base for special education programs.*
2. *To provide training for various professional and paraprofessional personnel needed to conduct programs for handicapped and gifted children.*
3. *To cooperate in the development and field testing of innovative programs.*
4. *To provide for the coordinated development of programs across disciplines and professions so that training and service models are congruent with emerging models for comprehensive community services.*
5. *To provide all students, whether or not they are in programs relating specifically to handicapped and gifted children, a basis for understanding and appreciating human differences.*
6. *To exemplify in their own programs of training, research, and community service—and even in their architecture—a concern for accommodating and upgrading the welfare of handicapped and gifted persons.*
7. *To cooperate with schools, agencies, and community groups in the creation and maintenance of needed special education programs.*

Levels of Government Responsibility for the Support of Special Education

An important set of policy questions for the organization and delivery of special educational services is concerned with the allocation of public responsibilities at the different governmental levels: local and intermediate*, state and provincial, and Federal. One of the basic tenets of a democratic society is that education should be free, universal, equal, and designed to further each individual's optimal development. In implementing these principles, the different governments must provide not only financial supports, but legal, political, and administrative assistance as well. The intent and provision of laws relating to education must be translated into action at every governmental level.

Since education is not a static process, the governmental agencies responsible for carrying out the legal mandates must provide leadership at every level to encourage improvement and innovation in the schools.

Local School Districts

Policy: ***Local and intermediate school districts should provide continuing support for their educational services, including participation in the financing of every educational program in the locality.***

The local or primary school district should be responsible for conducting at least annual reviews of all children who are legal residents of the district (although they may be placed outside the district) to assure that the education of each child is proceeding adequately. The school district should maintain a completely up-to-date roster of all its children and excuse, expell, or exclude children from school only under extraordinary conditions.

The district carries major responsibility for the quality of its special education programs and for coordination with other agencies to achieve comprehensive child centered services.

*The term "intermediate" refers to special consortiums of local districts or to broad regional or zonal organizations that carry responsibility for specialized services within a broader than local district school area.

State and Provincial Governments

Policy: ***The basic responsibility for providing educational programs for all children rests with state and provincial governments. They should provide financial supports to develop and encourage the improvement of comprehensive educational services to assure adequate educational opportunities to every child at no direct cost to his family.***

Special financial supports should be offered by them to the school districts, singly or in combination, and intermediate units so that no "excess" local cost is involved in providing needed specialized programs of high quality for exceptional children. All state financial charges and aids relating to exceptional children should be of such form that no agency is induced to choose a particular form of education or placement for a child on the basis of financial advantage to itself. Similarly, financial aid patterns should not encourage simple categorizing-labeling of children.

A particular responsibility of state and provincial governments is to provide professional leadership and direction to a carefully planned program of special education and to assure cooperation among the several departments of government that may be able to help serve exceptional children and their families.

The Federal Government (United States)

(This portion of the document does not necessarily propose any policies for countries other than the United States. Full recognition is extended here to the differences among nations. It is not the intention of this document to attempt to influence any national government other than the United States of America.)

Since an educated and informed citizenry is basic to a democracy, it is the obligation of the Federal government to make certain that every child is provided with a free and equal education. Children are the nation's primary resource and, as such, every child

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Since an educated and informed citizenry is basic to a democracy, it is the obligation of the Federal government to make certain that every child is provided with a free and equal education. Children are the nation's primary resource and, as such, every child is entitled to an optimal education to maximize his contribution to the continuing development of the nation.

For this reason, there is particular justification for the Federal government to support aspects of the educational enterprise that cannot reasonably be undertaken and supported individually by the several states. For example, the training of personnel at the most advanced levels and the support of research are activities that probably cannot be well served by the several states or local educational agencies.

Policy: ***In general, and in the national interest, the Federal government should provide major support to programs in the field of special education (1) that are a direct Federal responsibility such as programs in Federally operated schools for Indian American children and the education of the dependents in the Department of Defense programs; or (2) that serve regional or national needs, such as (a) the education of migrant children, (b) the training of leadership personnel to serve as a high-level, mobile, national resource, and (c) the maintenance of major research, development, and dissemination activities.***

The Federal government should provide financial supports, including assistance for specialized school construction, to individual and combinations of school districts that wish to provide innovative or exemplary programs for handicapped and gifted children or that, for any reason, enroll an unusually high proportion of children with special needs.

Because the education of exceptional children has, in general, been a neglected area, the Federal government should provide special categories of support to meet their needs.

The Federal government should provide a strong source of professional leadership in special educaton with emphasis on the assessment of needs, planning of needed programs, and dissemination of information.

POLICY STATEMENT ON GO

The 1971 Delegate Assembly approved the Policy Statement on Governmental Affairs. The statement, developed by the CEC Legislative Committee (Leo Connor, Chairman), was read and discussed by many CEC members and units. A draft appeared in the March 1970 issue of Exceptional Children. *A copy with accompanying study guide was sent to unit presidents in September 1970 with the request that unit members discuss the statement and send their reactions and recommendations to the Chairman of the Legislative Committee. Many units responded to this request, and the statement approved by the 1971 Delegate Assembly reflects those recommendations received in time to be considered by the Committee. The statement as published includes an amendment by the 1972 Delegate Assembly.*

The Council for Exceptional Children is an association of professional personnel and other persons whose principal purpose is to advance the education of exceptional children and youth. These children's needs differ sufficiently from other children's so that they require special educational services in addition to those presently available through regular education programs. While the characteristics of children and youth included in exceptional vary greatly from one governmental jurisdiction to another, generally children and youth having sensory deficits, physical handicaps, mental retardation, social and emotional maladjustment, neurological impairment, specific learning disabilities, and superior intellectual and creative abilities are considered exceptional. Exceptional children and youth are found in all communities regardless of socioeconomic or cultural factors.

The Council for Exceptional Children is committed to obtaining optimal educational opportunity for all exceptional children and youth just as certain groups of children and youth have been provided specialized programs within the regular education structure. ***It is the Council's belief that our nation must be morally and ethically committed to providing exceptional children and youth with the programs they require to develop their potentials fully.*** Implementation of such a program is no more than the confirmation of the basic tenet "to promote the general welfare" of all the people of the nation. No less can be expected from a nation whose technological, professional, and economic resources are the greatest ever amassed in the history of man. ***The Council further believes that it is the responsibility of its members and all persons concerned about exceptional children and youth to assure realization of this development of potential.*** Only through this commitment will exceptional children and youth have the opportunity for maximum self realization and assimilation into the mainstream of our society.

Legislation has been the means by which exceptional children and youth have been guaranteed the educational opportunities of our society. The Council is deeply committed to the effective implementation of existing legislation in the interest of exceptional children and youth. The Council seeks extension and creation of legislation in a manner which will encourage and augment quality service programs at all government levels. To provide the scope and kind of services needed, ***the Council endorses legislation and appropriations to strengthen and enhance this nation's instructional programs for all children and youth. While such general provisions should benefit the exceptional child, the Council believes that specific legislative provisions are necessary to offer those children and youth with exceptional needs the opportunity to develop their fullest potentials.***

"To promote the general welfare," as noted in the Constitution of the United States, has long been recognized as a primary function of all levels of government. As it relates to the exceptional child, the concept of the "general welfare" has varied greatly from protecting society from the deviant to a modern concept of aiding those whose deviance necessitates special interventions. Since the mid nineteenth century, Federal, s
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The task ahead is still great. Although larger sums of money are expended every year and more laws are passed, the majority of exceptional children and youth are not yet receiving the educational services they need. ***It is the Council's belief that all levels of government must formally, through law, make a commitment to guarantee every exceptional child the educational opportunities he needs before such services will ever be available. The Council further believes that all persons concerned about the education of exceptional children and youth must maintain efforts to insure that legislation is fully implemented.***

Scope of Program

Education for exceptional children and youth requires the well planned and purposeful coordination of many disciplines. Special education is a cross disciplinary, problem oriented field of services which is directed toward mobilizing and improving a variety of resources to meet the educational needs of exceptional children and youth.

Programs for exceptional children and youth are varied in nature and are conducted in a variety of settings depending on the individual needs of the child, his family, and the community. It is the Council's belief that it is society's responsibility ***to extend the opportunity for every individual to be educated to the full extent of his capacities, whatever they may be or however they may be attenuated by special circumstances. There is no dividing line which excludes some children and includes others in educational programs.***

The commitment to education for all encompasses the responsibility of providing special forms of educa-

tion to children and youth with exceptional characteristics and needs. ***The Council believes that provisions should be made for services which prevent and ameliorate conditions negatively affecting the development and education of children and youth, from preschool programs beginning at birth and continuing through adult education.*** While the primary objective should be to provide education in as normal a setting as possible, the education must be extended to children and youth wherever they may be. ***The Council further affirms the principle that all legislation should require the widest continuum of instructional and other needed services from specialized schools to fully integrated schools.*** This responsibility extends to all types of exceptionalities, regardless of the degree to which a child may eventually be able to contribute to society. To this end, ***the Council supports efforts to eliminate exclusion clauses in compulsory school attendance laws and other such laws and administrative practices which deny exceptional children and youth the educational opportunity they require.***

The Maintenance of the Dignity of the Exceptional Child

The purposes of special education are no different from those of regular education in a democratic society. The focus is on the individual and his optimal development as a skilled, free, and purposeful person able to manage himself in open society. When independent living is not feasible and special residential placement is required, the aim is still one of maximum educational development and freedom of the individual.

In our democratic society, we have created a system of law to protect the individual from the abuses of society, particularly from the abuses of the agencies established by society to serve its needs. Often in the attempt to provide what appears to be needed services, the rights of the individual are overlooked. For this reason, ***the Council urges constant vigilance on the part of all persons engaged in the education of exceptional children and youth to assure that the rights of exceptional children and youth and their families are understood and observed. The Council further suggests that all public programs and private programs utilizing public funds be open to review and that flexibility be provided to allow for judicial consideration of such matters.***

Federal, State, and Local Relations

The Council believes that the various levels of government involved in the education of exceptional children and youth have unique and common areas of responsibility.

Intermediate and Local School Districts

Intermediate and local school districts should provide continuing leadership for all educational services in the community, including participating in the financing of every education program in the district. Intermediate and local school districts carry major responsibility for the quality of educational services to exceptional children and youth and for leadership and coordination with other agencies to achieve comprehensive child centered services.

The Council believes that school districts should be responsible for an annual review of exceptional children and youth who are legal residents of the district to assure that their education is proceeding adequately, even though they may be receiving their educational services outside of their district of residence.

State Governments

The basic responsibility for guaranteeing an education to all children rests with state governments; however, the fulfillment of this responsibility is effected in cooperation with Federal and local education authorities. ***The Council believes that it is the responsibility of the state to guarantee each child comprehensive educational opportunities without cost to the child or his family.*** Special financial support should be offered to the intermediate and local districts or combinations of these units so that no excess local cost is involved in providing specialized quality programs, services, and facilities. While the cost of services for exceptional children and youth varies greatly, such considerations should not affect the goal of optimal programing for every child. ***The Council believes that no financial incentive should be provided to encourage the adoption of a less than optimal education program.*** A particular responsibility of state governments is to provide progressive leader-

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The Federal Government

The Council believes the Federal government should give major attention to guaranteeing educational opportunities to children and youth whose education has been neglected. Because education of exceptional children and youth has, in general, been a neglected area, special categories of support should be directed to meeting their needs.

The Federal government should also provide increased support of professional leadership in the field of special education with emphasis on assessment of needs, planning of needed programs, preparation of personnel, and research.

The Federal government should also provide support to colleges, universities, and other appropriate agencies to assist in operating programs to prepare all needed personnel to conduct comprehensive special education programs and services.

The Federal government should provide financial support, including assistance for specialized school construction, to school districts and combinations of school districts which wish to provide innovative or exemplary programs for exceptional children and youth or which, for any reason, enroll an unusually high proportion of children and youth with special needs.

Administrative and Fiscal Identity

Administrative units at all levels of government responsible for providing leadership must have responsibility for developing policy regarding the education of exceptional children and youth. However, such policy must reflect the thinking of all persons involved in the education of exceptional children and youth. ***The Council believes that advisory committees can help government agencies assess problems, plan and set priorities, and develop and oversee policies regarding the education of exceptional children and youth. The Council further believes that all policies involving education of exceptional children and youth should be***

brought before recurring public and legislative scrutiny.

The Council commends Congress for legislation establishing the Bureau of Education for the Handicapped in a position of prominence in the US Office of Education for the purpose of organizing activities relating to the handicapped and improving implementation of programs and funding. ***The Council urges state and local education agencies to develop similar administrative structures on a policy making level and staff such programs with professionally qualified personnel who can provide dynamic leadership.*** Creative leadership at all levels of government is imperative for the development and improvement of programs for exceptional children and youth. For this reason, the Council supports efforts to improve the quality of leadership and administrative operations in all phases of educational endeavor.

Success of all education programs is dependent on the provision of adequate funding. This is especially true of programs for exceptional children and youth. Often funding for such programs becomes buried in general budgeting procedures. In such cases, exceptional children and youth do not have the opportunity to have their needs directly considered by the decision making bodies of government. Therefore, ***the Council urges that efforts be undertaken to assure that budgetary provision for exceptional children and youth be clearly identified. The Council opposes general funding procedures that would circumvent direct aid to programs for exceptional children and youth. This position must be maintained until all children and youth are afforded the benefits of universal education and training.***

Intergovernmental Planning

The success of the functions of the three levels of government requires close cooperative planning of a short and long range nature. Such planning requires excellence in communicative skills and facilities. Such plans for the education of exceptional children and youth should form the basis for new and improved legislative and government policies at all levels of government.

Private Sector

The private sector has long played a significant role in the field of special education. The elements of the private sector are varied and encompass the full gamut of levels of educational services from preschool education through higher education, research, demonstration projects, training of personnel, technology, and the development and production of media and materials. Increasingly, there has developed a working relationship between the public and private sectors regarding exceptional children and youth.

The Council believes that the opportunity for all children to receive an education is a public responsibility, but that program operation of such services may be conducted in varied settings and through a variety of public and private agencies. For this reason, the Council supports the development and provision of special services in both the public and private sectors and the support for such services through public funds, under public control and supervision.

The Council believes that private enterprise can make major contributions to the development of adequate special education services. The Council urges greater cooperation between government and private enterprise to meet the needs of exceptional children and youth. ***The Council urges that legislation be flexible enough to allow administrative agencies to involve the private sector in program development in all aspects.***

Preparation and Utilization of Personnel

The quality of educational services for exceptional children and youth resides in the abilities, qualifications, and competencies of the personnel who provide the services. There is a serious deficit in the present availability of fully qualified manpower able to extend such services. This lack of competent personnel seriously hampers efforts to extend educational services to all exceptional children and youth. There is a need to investigate new modes for evaluation of professional competence in the desire to accelerate the process of training effective professionals and paraprofessionals in significant numbers to meet the needs of the field. ***The Council affirms the principle that, through law, each exceptional child and youth is entitled to instruction and services by professionally trained and competent personnel.*** In addition, there is a need for new and appropriate training patterns whic
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Through legislation, the Federal government has played a dominant role in supporting initial efforts to prepare personnel for educating exceptional children and youth. ***The Council believes that the Federal government should continue and expand its efforts to train high level leadership personnel, assist through leadership and financial support the development of agencies to prepare personnel, and conduct research in new systems of preparing and utilizing personnel and meeting manpower needs.*** Definitive data are needed concerning personnel utilization and retention and other factors of manpower usage.

In recent years, state and local governments, in order to improve professional competencies, have made greater efforts to support formal training programs in colleges and universities and facilitate in-service and workshop efforts. The Council believes that such activities should be increased and that greater state and local financial support should be given to their development and operation. ***The Council advocates extension of state and Federal funding to new and emerging special education services.***

Further efforts need to be undertaken to develop a national program to attract more qualified and motivated individuals into the field of special education. The Council believes that such a program must be conducted through national leadership with full involvement and participation of all levels of government and professional organizations. It is only through such a well coordinated effort in recruitment that the field's manpower needs for qualified and motivated personnel can ever be met.

Research and Dissemination

The Council sees research and its dissemination as inextricably interrelated. No longer can these two functions be considered as separate entities if exceptional children and youth are to benefit from such enterprises. ***The Council recommends that all government funded research projects include a means for dissemination that will contribute toward upgrading the instruction of exceptional children and youth.***

The Council believes that greater emphasis needs to be given to improving educational methods and curriculum for exceptional children and youth. It is suggested that government agencies give particular attention to applied educational research which would provide for the empirical evaluation of educational materials, analysis of teacher-pupil interaction, efficacy of media and technology as they relate to the instructional process, and development and evaluation of innovative instructional methods for exceptional children and youth.

The Council recommends additional Federal funding to bring about effective coordination of services and research efforts in order to provide a national information service encompassing curriculum methods and education technology. Funds from all levels of government should be made available for the development of more effective information and dissemination services. To facilitate more effective dissemination, an interchangeable coding and retrieval system compatible with educational enterprises and disciplines should be established across organization, agency, and government lines. ***Considering the exceptional child, through the teacher, as the ultimate recipient of service, the Council believes that information and dissemination systems should be coordinated so that a concerted and unified thrust is possible.*** Such systems should not be unique to geographic areas but national in scope.

The Council strongly recommends that government approved dissemination activities be provided for separately in the Office of Education budget and not subsumed under some other priority. Further, it is recommended that dissemination be defined as greater than information delivery, but that it must include the identification and implementation of better educational practice with supported units whose task is to train school personnel in the implementation of improved practices and procedures.

A coordinating unit for such a system is mandatory in order to identify, redirect, and deliver information among the various units. The goal here is to constantly survey the information needs of the multiple audiences; inform appropriate agencies who can develop materials, methods, programs, and strategies to meet those needs; inform users of worthwhile and proven resources; and encourage their implementation.

Program Evaluation

Programs designed for the purpose of providing educational opportunities for exceptional children and youth must not be viewed as constant, for the end product must always be the exceptional child and his personal improvement. For this reason all programs should contain plans to evaluate their effectiveness, and the results of such evaluations should be presented for public review.

The Council believes that all legislation to fund existing programs or create new programs should contain mechanisms for effective evaluation and that governmental advisory bodies should review the findings of evaluations on a regular basis. There is a need for external as well as internal systems of evaluation which should be developed to aid in the evaluation of programs for exceptional children and youth.

Liaison with Other Agencies and Organizations

Exceptional children and youth and their families require the services of many agencies which deal with their various needs. In most cases, the efforts can be made more effective through a cooperative interagency and interdisciplinary approach whereby special education has a primary function for liaison with other agencies and organizations. This approach will not only encourage a consistent effort on the part of all concerned with the child's education and development but will provide for joint establishment of the priorities and respective responsibilities for meeting his needs. Legislation should be encouraged at the state and Federal levels for a coordinated approach to multifunded projects under one application procedure to insure comprehensive services to the child. Such legislation should support and facilitate intergovernmental cooperation as well as interagency linkage. ***The Council encourages legislation which promotes a coordinated approach to planning for the needs of the exceptional child and youth and strengthens the relationships of spe… private agencies pro…*** levels should consist… fort.

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Responsibilities of The Council for Exceptional Children

The Council recognizes that the provision of public services to exceptional children and youth is a function of the governmental process. For this reason, ***the Council urges and supports the active involvement of its members in activities which will build greater awareness on the part of parents, communities, and governmental officials to the needs of exceptional children and youth and will extend appropriate information to such bodies in their efforts to carry out the objectives of this policy statement.***

The Council believes that it is the responsibility of all persons concerned about the needs of exceptional children and youth to continually seek to improve government provisions for their education. In this regard, the Council pledges its assistance in providing needed information and in helping to develop the necessary strategies to attain improvement of educational services for exceptional children and youth.

Special and Unique Concerns as Related to Minority Group Individuals

The Council for Exceptional Children recognizes the special and unique needs of minority group individuals and pledges its full support toward promoting all efforts which will help to bring them into full and equitable participating membership in the total society. For this reason, ***the Council believes that all Federal, state, and local agencies should develop human relations training programs involving both regular and special educators. Furthermore, the Council believes that developing awareness and insight to the special and unique needs of minority group children will help sensitize all professionals and paraprofessionals who serve exceptional children toward a better understanding of the needs of all children.***

RESOLUTION ON RIGHT TO AN EDUCATION

Be it resolved that:

The Council for Exceptional Children reaffirms its belief that every child has the right to an appropriate publicly supported education. The Council for Exceptional Children applauds recent judicial, legislative, and administrative actions which have supported this right.

We are concerned that there are still children at home and in institutions who have been excluded from the right to an education.

We are concerned that there are many children who have been placed in educational settings without concern for their rights of due process.

We are concerned that there are numerous children desperately needing special educational assistance, who are denied such assistance by the educational system.

The Council for Exceptional Children urges its members individually, and through their chapters and federations, to initiate and support activities to assure children the right to an appropriate publicly supported education.

Approved by 1972 CEC Delegate Assembly